

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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SUBJ: N. Y. TIMES ARTICLE ON BURUNDI, JUNE 17

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 1973. QUOTE: WITNESSES TELL OF HORROR IN NEW BURUNDI SLAUGHTER DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, JUNE 16 - MORE THAN 20,000 MEMBERS OF THE HUTU TRIBE OF THE TINY CENTRAL AFRICAN NATION OF BURUNDI WHO HAVE FLED TO TANZANIA IN THE LAST MONTH ARE PAINTING A GRIM PICTURE OF SLAUGHTER TAKING PLACE IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF BURUNDI.

HOW MANY HUTU TRIBESMEN HAVE BEEN KILLED SINCE THEN IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE NUMBER RUNS INTO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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THOUSANDS.

A MONTH AGO, MEMBERS OF THE HUTU TRIBE, WHICH NUMBERS THREE MILLION, TRIED TO OUST THE RULING TUTSI TRIBE, WHICH HAS ABOUT 600,000 MEMBERS.

JUST OVER A YEAR AGO, AFTER A SIMILAR UPRISING, THE TUTSI GOVERNMENT OF COL. MICHEL MICOMBERO BEGAN A PROGRAM OF REPRESSION IN WHICH, ACCORDING TO STATISTICS ASSEMBLED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY BY MISSIONARIES, SOME 80,000 EDUCATED HUTU TRIBESMEN WERE SLAUGHTERED.

THE HUTU, A BANTU PEOPLE OF STOCKY BUILD, CAME TO THE REGION THAT IS NOW BURUNDI SEVERAL CENTURIES AGO FROM THE SOUTHWEST. A THOUSAND YEARS AGO THE TUTSI, GENERALLY TALL AND SLENDER, BEGAN ARRIVING FROM THE NORTH. THE TUTSI BECAME OVERLORDS, DOMINATING THE HUTU PEASANTS.

WITNESSES COMING FROM BURUNDI HAVE REPORTED OPEN MASS GRAVES ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL, BUJUMBURA, AS WELL AS TRUCKLOADS OF BODIES IN THE CITY AND THE CENTRAL TOWN OF GITEGA.

THIS WEEK A LETTER WAS RECEIVED HERE FROM EIGHT ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS WHO ARE WORKING IN MISSIONS AT MUHINDA, MULERA AND KASUMO, JUST INSIDE TANZANIA ON THE BURUNDI BORDER. THE LETTER, SIGNED BY THE REV. RAMON VICENS, SECRETARY OF THE MULEMA DEANERY, SAID THAT THE PRIESTS FELT THEY COULD NO LONGER REMAIN SILENT WHILE THE WORLD IGNORED THE SLAUGHTER IN BURUNDI.

WORSE THAN LAST YEAR

FATHER VICENS WROTE: QUOTE EIGHT DAYS AGO I INTERVIEWED A GROUP OF HUTU WHO HAD JUST MANAGED TO SAFELY REACH TANZANIA. I ASKED THEM WHAT THEY HAD SEEN IN BURUNDI AND WHY THEY WERE RUNNING AWAY. THEY TOLD ME THEY WERE RUNNING AWAY FROM A PROGRAM OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE HUTU WORSE THAN THE ONE LAST YEAR.

QUOTE THEY SAID, INNER QUOTE LAST YEAR WE MANAGED TO UNCLASSIFIED

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STAY AND NOTHING HAPPENED TO US BECAUSE THEY WERE MORE INTERESTED IN LEADERS AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE AMONG THE HUTU POPULATION, END INNER QUOTE NOW THE REFUGEES SAY THEY ARE KILLING EVERYBODY.

QUOTE THEN THEY TOLD ME THAT A GROUP OF ABOUT 50 SOLDIERS ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS HELPED BY 400 TO

500 YOUNGSTERS OF THE JEUNESSE REVOLUTIONNAIRE (THE YOUTH WING OF COLONEL MICOMBERO' S RULING PARTY) ARMED WITH SPEARS AND KNIVES WERE SYSTEMATICALLY MOVING FROM ONE HILL TO ANOTHER BURNING HOUSES OF THE HUTU AND KILLING ANY HUTU THEY COULD FIND. UNQUOTE

FATHER VICENS CONTINUES: QUOTE THEN THEY TOLD ME THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS HAD HAD THEIR BELLIES OPENED AND BREASTS CUT. PREGNANT WOMEN HAD HAD THEIR CHILDREN TAKEN OUT AND LEFT DEAD BY THEIR SIDES. EVEN PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DEFECTS WERE KILLED. THIS TIME IS WORSE THAN THE FIRST THEY SAY. NOW THEY WANT TO FINISH ALL THE HUTU POPULATION IN THE SOUTH EITHER BY KILLING THEM OR MAKING THEM RUN AWAY. UNQUOTE

MANY OF THE REFUGEES ARRIVING AT THE MISSIONS ARE WOUNDED. ONE WOMAN WHO ARRIVED AT A SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MISSION HOSPITAL HAD HAD BOTH HER HANDS HACKED OFF WITH A MACHETE. THAT IS A COMMON REPRISAL, FOR WHEN THE SHORT HUTU FIND THE TALL TUTSI, THEY OFTEN CUT OFF THEIR LEGS AT THE ANKLES.

CARRYING DEAD CHILD

FATHER VICENS SAID THAT ONE WOMAN ARRIVED AT KASUMO MISSION AFTER WALKING FOR TWO DAYS WITH TWO CHILDREN STRAPPED TO HER BACK. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE EUROPEAN SISTER TOOK THEM DOWN THAT THE WOMAN LEARNED ONE WAS DEAD-- ITS BACK SPLIT OPEN WITH A KNIFE. ANOTHER REFUGEE TOLD THE PRIEST HE HAD SEEN TUTSI TROOPS HERDING PEASANTS INTO A GRASS HUT AT GUNPOINT. THE HUT WAS THEN SET AFIRE AND THE HUTU BURNED TO DEATH. QUOTE IN FRONT OF SUCH SUFFERING WE PRIESTS THOUGHT WE COULD NOT KEEP SILENT, UNCLASSIFIED

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UNQUOTE FATHER VICENS SAID.

800 REFUGEES A DAY

TANZANIAN OFFICIALS IN THE FRONTIER AREA ESTIMATE THAT A MINIMUM OF 800 NEW REFUGEES ARE CROSSING EVERY DAY. AFTER LAST YEAR' S REPRESSION AT LEAST 30,000 FLED TO TANZANIA. OF THESE, 16,000, PLUS 6,000 WHO HAVE CROSSED IN THE LAST MONTH, HAVE BEEN MOVED 250 INLAND TO A REFUGEE CAMP AT ULYANKULU WHERE SCHOOLS, CLINICS AND PERMANENT WATER HAVE BEEN PROVIDED ALONG WITH PERMANENT HOUSING, LAND, TOOLS AND SEED.

BUT MANY THOUSANDS REMAIN IN THE FRONTIER AREA. AT

MULERA MISSION ALONE 7,500 ARE BEING CARED FOR. A REFUGEE COLLECTING CENTER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED JUST OUTSIDE THE LAKE TANGANYIKA PORT OF KIGTMA IN TANZANIA BUT CONDITIONS ARE PITIFUL.

THE REFUGEES WHO REMAIN IN THE FRONTIER AREA CONSTITUTE A CONTINUING POINT OF TENSION. IN MARCH, BURUNDI TROOPS CROSSED INTO TANZANIA AFTER A HUTU BAND HAD AMBUSHED A GROUP OF TROOPS INSIDE BURUNDI, SPEARING A COLONEL. IN THE ATTACK ON TANZANIA THEY RAVAGED THREE VILLAGES, KILLING ABOUT 80 PEOPLE-- HALF OF THEM HUTU REFUGEES. END QUOTE ROGERS

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